

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

June 16, 2009

Dear Veterans Advisory Board Member:

Knowing of its importance to you, I am writing today about an urgent matter related to the health and welfare of our troops in harm's way: an emergency troop funding bill currently before Congress.

I was proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with our Armed Forces last month when I voted for the emergency funding our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan need to carry out their missions and return home with success. Nearly 370 Democrats and Republicans in Congress voted for this original bill, and there is no reason why the final version, which is coming to the floor this week, cannot and should not receive the same strong, bipartisan support.

Unfortunately, not even something as sacred as troop funding is immune from the business-as-usual partisan politics that exists in Washington. In fact, the following changes have been made to the bill that will harm our troops in the field. Based upon the following changes in the legislation, I believe it is imperative to oppose the final version.

- **Troop funding used to bail out foreign countries.** Washington politicians in charge of Congress are taking scarce taxpayer dollars that should be used to support our troops and sending it overseas to help bailout foreign countries. Among the countries eligible for this bailout funding are Venezuela, Syria and Iran, which is currently engaged in a brutal crackdown of pro-democracy demonstrators.
- **Guantanamo detainees can be transferred to U.S. soil.** Washington politicians have included a loophole to allow the Administration to transfer Guantanamo Bay detainees to the United States. Among the detainees at the Naval facility at Guantanamo Bay is Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks. The May troop funding bill I strongly supported prohibited troop funding from being used to transfer detainees to the United States.
- **Release of detainee photos endangers our troops.** Washington politicians have stripped a key part of the bill that would prohibit photographs of detainees from being released. Our military commanders strongly oppose the release of detainee photographs because they will be used as propaganda by al-Qaeda and increase the danger to our troops in the field.

I believe strongly that our troops deserve a clean funding bill that focuses on their safety on the battlefield, not on unrelated and controversial issues – like taxpayer-funded financial bailouts for foreign nations – that can and should be debated in separate legislation.

In March, I had the chance to speak with members of A Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, Army National Guard in Geneseo, welcoming them home after a successful tour in Afghanistan. These fine young men and women are truly America's heroes and guardians of our freedom and liberty. I am

committed to giving them the support they need and deserve, both while on active duty and later as honored veterans. That is why I will oppose the final version of the troop funding bill and respectfully request the Democratic leadership instead pass the clean bill that our troops deserve.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss this matter further. Thank you for your continued work in representing the more than 50,000 veterans who call our congressional district home.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris", with a large, stylized initial "C" and a trailing flourish.

CHRISTOPHER J. LEE
Member of Congress